

Upper Sorbian language

Upper Sorbian (*hornjoserbšćina*) is a minority language spoken by Sorbs in Germany in the historical province of Upper Lusatia, which is today part of Saxony. It is grouped in the West Slavic language branch, together with Lower Sorbian, Czech, Polish, Slovak and Kashubian.

Contents
History
Upper Sorbian in Germany
Phonology
Vowels
Consonants
Samples
See also
References
Bibliography
External links
Dictionaries
Czech-Sorbian and Sorbian-Czech
German-Sorbian
Sorbian-German

History

The history of the Upper Sorbian language in Germany began with the Slavic migrations during the 6th century AD. Beginning in the 12th century, there was a massive influx of rural Germanic settlers from Flanders, Saxony, Thuringia and Franconia. This so-called "Ostsiedlung" (eastern settlement or expansion) led to a slow but steady decline in use of the Sorbian language. In addition, in the Saxony region, the Sorbian language was legally subordinated to the German language. Language prohibitions were later added: In 1293, the Sorbian language was forbidden in Berne castle before the courts; in 1327 it was forbidden in Zwickau and Leipzig, and from 1424 on it was forbidden in Meissen. Further, there was the condition in many guilds of the cities of the area to accept only members of German-language origin.

Upper Sorbian	
<i>hornjoserbšćina</i> , <i>hornjoserbsce</i>	
Pronunciation	[ˈhɔʁnjɔ ˌsɛʁpʃt͡ʃina]
Native to	Germany
Region	Saxony, Brandenburg
Ethnicity	Sorbs
<div>Native speakers</div>	13,000 (2007) ^[1]
<div>Language family</div>	<div>Indo-European<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Balto-Slavic<ul style="list-style-type: none">Slavic<ul style="list-style-type: none">West Slavic<ul style="list-style-type: none">Sorbian<ul style="list-style-type: none">Upper Sorbian</div>
<div>Writing system</div>	Latin (Sorbian alphabet)
Official status	
<div>Official language in</div>	Regional language in Brandenburg and Saxony.
Language codes	
ISO 639-2	hsb (https://www.loc.gov/standards/iso639-2/php/langcodes_name.php?code_ID=192)
ISO 639-3	hsb
Glottolog	uppe1395 (http://glottolog.org/resource/linguoid/id/uppe1395) ^[2]
Linguasphere	53-AAA-bb < 53-AAA-b < 53-AAA-b...-d

However, the central areas of the Milzener and Lusitzer, in the area of today's Lusatia, were relatively unaffected by the new German language settlements and legal restrictions. The language therefore flourished there. By the 17th century, the number of Sorbian speakers in that area grew to over 300,000. The oldest evidence of written Upper Sorbian is the *Burger Eydt Wendisch* monument, which was discovered in the city of Bautzen and dates to the year 1532.

(varieties:
53-AAA-bba to
53-AAA-bbf)

Upper Sorbian in Germany

There are an estimated 20,000 to 25,000 speakers of Upper Sorbian. Almost all of these live in the state of Saxony, chiefly in the district of Bautzen (Budyšin). The stronghold of the language is the village of Croswitz (Chrósćicy) and the surrounding municipalities, especially to the west of it. In this core area, Upper Sorbian remains the predominant vernacular.

Phonology

Vowels

The vowel inventory of Upper Sorbian is exactly the same as that of Lower Sorbian.^[3] It is also very similar to the vowel inventory of Slovene.

Vowel phonemes^{[3][4]}

	Front	Central	Back
<u>Close</u>	<u>i</u>		<u>u</u>
<u>Close-mid</u>	<u>e</u>		<u>o</u>
<u>Open-mid</u>	<u>ɛ</u>		<u>ɔ</u>
<u>Open</u>		<u>a</u>	



A bilingual sign in Germany;
German in first place and Upper
Sorbian in second

- /i/ is mid-centralized to [ɪ] after hard consonants.^[5]
- /e, o/ are diphthongized to [ɪɛ, ʊɔ] in slow speech.^{[3][6]}
- The /e–ɛ/ and /o–ɔ/ distinctions are weakened or lost in unstressed syllables.^[7]

Consonants

Consonant phonemes^{[3][8]}

		<u>Labial</u>		<u>Dental/ Alveolar</u>		<u>Palatal</u>	<u>Velar/ Uvular</u>		<u>Glottal</u>
		<u>hard</u>	<u>soft</u>	<u>hard</u>	<u>soft</u>	<u>soft</u>	<u>hard</u>	<u>soft</u>	<u>hard</u>
<u>Nasal</u>		<u>m</u>	<u>m^j</u>	<u>n</u>		<u>ɲ</u>			
<u>Plosive</u>	<u>voiceless</u>	<u>p</u>	<u>p^j</u>	<u>t</u>			<u>k</u>		
	<u>voiced</u>	<u>b</u>	<u>b^j</u>	<u>d</u>			<u>g</u>		
<u>Affricate</u>	<u>voiceless</u>			<u>ʈs</u>	<u>(ʈs^j)</u>	<u>ʈʃ</u>			
	<u>voiced</u>			<u>(dʒ)</u>		<u>dʒ</u>			
<u>Fricative</u>	<u>voiceless</u>	<u>f</u>		<u>s</u>		<u>ʃ</u>	<u>x</u>		
	<u>voiced</u>	<u>(v)</u>		<u>z</u>	<u>(z^j)</u>	<u>ʒ</u>			<u>h</u>
<u>Trill</u>							<u>ʀ</u>	<u>ʀ^j</u>	
<u>Approximant</u>		<u>β</u>	<u>ɥ</u>	<u>ɹ</u>		<u>j</u>			

- /v, dʒ, ʈs^j, z^j/ are very rare.^{[9][10][11]}
- /β/ is a somewhat velarized bilabial approximant [β^ɣ], whereas /ɥ/ (the soft counterpart of /β/) is a strongly palatalized bilabial approximant [ɥ].^[12]
- /ʀ, ʀ^j/ are uvular [ʀ, ʀ^j]. The alveolar realization [r, r^j] is archaic.^[13]
- In most dialects, /ʈʃ, dʒ, ʃ, ʒ/ are palato-alveolar. This is unlike Lower Sorbian, where these consonants are laminal retroflex (flat postalveolar) [ʈʂ, ʂ, ʒ] (Lower Sorbian /ʈʂ/ does not have a voiced counterpart).^{[14][15]} Laminal retroflex realizations of /ʃ, ʒ/ also occur in Upper Sorbian dialects spoken in some villages north of Hoyerswerda.^{[16][17]}
- An aspirated [k^h] is a morpheme-initial allophone of /x/ in some cases, as well as a possible word-initial allophone of /k/.^[18]

Samples

The Lord's Prayer in Upper Sorbian:

Wótče naš, kiž sy w njebjesach. Swjeć so Twoje mjeno. Přińdź Twoje kralestwo. Stań so Twoja wola, kaž na njebju, tak na zemi. Wšědny chléb naš daj nam džens. Wodaj nam naše winy, jako my tež wodawamy swojim winikam. A njewjedź nas do spytowanja, ale wumóž nas wot zleho. Amen.

Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Upper Sorbian:

Wšitcy čłowjekojo su wot naroda swobodni a su jenacy po dostojnosći a prawach. Woni su z rozumom a swědomjom wobdarjeni a maja mjezsobu w duchu bratrowstwa wobchadžeć.

(All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.)^[19]

See also

- Lower Sorbian language

References

1. Upper Sorbian (<https://www.ethnologue.com/18/language/hsb/>) at *Ethnologue* (18th ed., 2015)
2. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Upper Sorbian" (<http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/uppe1395>). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
3. Stone (2002), p. 600.
4. Šewc-Schuster (1984), p. 20.
5. Šewc-Schuster (1984:34). The author states that [ɪ] is less front and somewhat lower than [i], but unlike Russian [ɪ̯], it is front, not central.
6. Šewc-Schuster (1984), pp. 32–33.
7. Stone (2002), pp. 601, 606–607.
8. Šewc-Schuster (1984), p. 46.
9. Šewc-Schuster (1984), pp. 36, 38.
10. Stone (2002), pp. 603–604.
11. Zygis (2003), p. 191.
12. Šewc-Schuster (1984:36–37, 41, 46). On page 36, the author states that Upper Sorbian /β/ is less velar than Polish /w/. The weakness of the velarization is confirmed by the corresponding image on page 37.
13. Stone (2002), p. 602.
14. Šewc-Schuster (1984), pp. 40–41.
15. Zygis (2003), pp. 180–181, 190–191.
16. Šewc-Schuster (1984), p. 41.
17. Zygis (2003), p. 180.
18. Šewc-Schuster (1984), pp. 26–27, 42–43.
19. Sorbian (<http://www.omniglot.com/writing/sorbian.htm>) at Omniglot.com

Bibliography

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- Zygis, Marzena (2003), "Phonetic and Phonological Aspects of Slavic Sibilant Fricatives" (http://www.zas.gwz-berlin.de/fileadmin/material/ZASPiL_Volltexte/zp32/zaspil32-zygis.pdf) (PDF), *ZAS Papers in Linguistics*, 3: 175–213

External links

- Online course for Upper and Lower Sorbian (<https://sprachkurs.sorbischlernen.de/#/welcome>) (English, Sorbian, German)
- Course in Upper Sorbian (<https://web.archive.org/web/20090116153825/http://serbscina.w.inte.ria.pl/iso/eindex.htm>)
- Kurs serbskeje rěče (<http://enricu.wordpress.com/webowa-kawarna/kurs-serbskeje-rece-kurz-lu-zicke-srbstiny/>), introductory texts of the lessons included in the Sorbian language textbook

Dictionaries

- (in Czech and Upper Sorbian) Upper Sorbian dictionary with common phrases (<https://web.archive.org/web/20161004132033/http://slovník.vancl.eu/hls3/>)
- (in German and Upper Sorbian) Upper Sorbian phraseology dictionary (<https://web.archive.org/web/20071219093318/http://sibz.whyi.org/frazeol/strony.php?spr=sorb&id=fraze&pro=sorb>)
- (in German and Upper Sorbian) SorbWord (<https://web.archive.org/web/20070517191411/http://gcjm.dyndns.org/sorbword/suchen.afp>)
- (in German and Upper Sorbian) Sorbian 'language practice' page (<https://web.archive.org/web/20070610180036/http://www.uni-leipzig.de/~sorb/seiten/hsb/05/recnopraktiske/sprachpraktische-hsb.html>) at Leipzig University
- (in German and Upper Sorbian) Sorbian information page (<https://web.archive.org/web/20080522003010/http://www.uni-leipzig.de/~sorb/seiten/hsb/05/leksikaliske/lexikalische-hsb.html>) at Leipzig University
- (in German and Upper Sorbian) Wortschatz.de (<https://web.archive.org/web/20070823101146/http://corpora.informatik.uni-leipzig.de/?dict=sorb>)

Czech-Sorbian and Sorbian-Czech

- at slovník.vancl.eu (<http://slovník.vancl.eu>)

German-Sorbian

- at sibz.whyi.org (<https://web.archive.org/web/20070928063438/http://sibz.whyi.org/~edi/wucbnica/woerterbuch.html>)
- at [Boehmak.de](http://www.boehmak.de) (<http://www.boehmak.de/>)

Sorbian-German

- at [Boehmak.de](http://www.boehmak.de) (<http://www.boehmak.de/sn.html>)
- at sibz.whyi.org (<https://web.archive.org/web/20070928063430/http://sibz.whyi.org/~edi/wucbnica/slovník.html>)

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